

# Public Health and Social Services Committee

## Regular Meeting Minutes

<b>DATE &amp; TIME:</b>	June 6, 2016, 6:00 PM
<b>LOCATION:</b>	K. L. Binder Library, 6 <sup>th</sup> Floor, COB
<b>PRESIDING OFFICER:</b>	Chairman Craig Lopez
<b>LEGISLATIVE STAFF:</b>	Nettie Tomshaw
<b>PRESENT:</b>	Legislators Lopez, Allen, Belfiglio, Heppner, Roberts
<b>EXCUSED:</b>	None
<b>QUORUM PRESENT:</b>	Yes
<b>OTHER ATTENDEES:</b>	Health Alliance Hospital CEO & President David Scarpino, and Health Alliance Hospital Chief Information and Community Officer (CIO) John Finch

Deputy Chairman Chris Allen called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM as Chairman Lopez was delayed. Chairman Lopez arrived at 6:20 PM.

Deputy Chairman Chris Allen introduced and welcomed Mr. Scarpino and Mr. Finch who came before the committee to provide an update regarding insurance negotiations between parent company Westchester Medical Hospital, and healthcare insurance provider Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield regarding the Kingston Health Alliance facility.

Mr. Scarpino explained Westchester Medical and Blue Cross had been in negotiations prior to the merger with Health Alliance. The crux of negotiations evolved around market rate wages for the retention of nursing staff who continue to seek better pay across the river. The hospital retains nurse trainees for about a year. Once trained, staff seeks higher wages – in some cases \$20/hr. higher for the same ICU nurse certification. Regular RN staffing receives \$12/hr. more, and this permeates throughout all positions within the hospital. Health Alliance cannot compete at the current rates. When minimum wage increases to \$15/hr., Health Alliance costs alone will be \$6 million.

Negotiations concluded with a signed contract, whereas any affiliate coming into the system by March 31, 2016 would receive rates twice as high as Health Alliance received prior to their merger with Westchester Medical. Health Alliance came on board March 30, 2016. Blue Cross reneged on the contract. They offered the hospital more than they currently receive, but less than what the contract specified.

Mr. Scarpino expressed although the negotiations have evolved into a legal contractual issue between parent company Westchester Medical Center and Blue Cross Blue Shield, both parties do want an expedited solution. The matter is no longer in Health Alliance's hands but left to the attorney's to resolve. The lawsuit was filed in Westchester County. The timeline to settle this matter is up in the air. Mr. Scarpino noted the ER on the Broadway campus still recognizes Blue Cross patients as "in network" along with some other preapproval circumstances. If a patient needs to stay longer and insurance concludes coverage to be out of network, the hospital will work through the difference. The patient comes first.

Legislator Heppner confirmed this has nothing to do with the New York State Health Exchange.

Legislator Belfiglio noted the county doesn't have an ombudsman for health insurance concerns and also discussed the PPO & POS premiums. Legislator Belfiglio will talk with Commissioner Carol Smith, MD regarding the county position, and then send a letter on behalf of the committee to both Westchester Medical and Blue Cross Blue Shield to encourage resolution asap.

The committee thanked Mr. Scarpino and Mr. Finch for the update and for coming on such short notice.

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**MOTION NO. 1** To Approve the Minutes of the May 2, 2016 Meeting  
**Motion Made By:** Legislator Carl Belfiglio  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Jonathan Heppner  
**Discussion:** None  
**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Allen, Belfiglio, Heppner, Roberts  
**Voting Against:** None  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 4  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** Carried

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## **RESOLUTIONS**

**MOTION NO. 2** Resolve to Approve Resolution No. 131 for June 21, 2016 Session  
**Motion Made By:** Chairman Lopez motioned to TAKE NO ACTION  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Chris Allen  
**Text of Motion:** Resolution No. 131 – Setting A Public Hearing On Proposed Local Law No. 3 Of 2016 (A Local Law Protecting Children From Exposure To Toxic Chemicals) To Be Held On Tuesday, June 21, 2016 At 7:05 PM.  
**Discussion:** Chairman Lopez noted per the request of sponsor Legislator Bartels, again opted to take no action taken until next month as more research is needed.  
**NO ACTION TAKEN**

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**MOTION NO. 3** Resolve to Approve Resolution No. 294 for June 21, 2016 Session  
**Motion Made By:** Legislator Kevin Roberts for discussion  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Chris Allen  
**Text of Motion:** Resolution No. 294 – Appointing Member To The Ulster County Trails Advisory Committee  
**Discussion:** None  
**Motion Made By:** Legislator Kevin Roberts  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Chris Allen  
**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Lopez, Allen, Belfiglio, Heppner, Roberts  
**Voting Against:** None  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 5  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** Carried

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**MOTION NO. 4**                      Resolve to Approve Resolution No. 308 for June 21, 2016 Session

**Motion Made By:**                      Legislator Kevin Roberts for discussion

**Motion Seconded By:**                      Legislator Chris Allen

**Text of Motion:**                      Resolution No. 308 – Amending The 2016 Ulster County Budget To Accept Increased Funding From The New York State Office Of Mental Health For Children’s Case Management Programs – Department Of Mental Health

**Discussion:**                      Chairman Lopez provided an overview whereas this resolution allows the county to accept additional NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) funding for children’s case management programs. State \$9873.00

**Motion Made By:**                      Legislator Chris Allen

**Motion Seconded By:**                      Legislator Kevin Robert

**Voting In Favor:**                      Legislators Lopez, Allen, Belfiglio, Heppner, Roberts

**Voting Against:**                      None

**No. of Votes in Favor:**                      5

**No. of Votes Against:**                      0

**Disposition:**                      Carried

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**MOTION NO. 5**                      Resolve to Approve Resolution No. 311 for June 21, 2016 Session

**Motion Made By:**                      Legislator Kevin Roberts for discussion

**Motion Seconded By:**                      Legislator Chris Allen

**Text of Motion:**                      Resolution No. 311 – Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Enter Into An Inter-Municipal OneStop Operator Agreement With New York State Department Of Labor And Ulster County Board Of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) – Department Of Employment And Training

**Discussion:**                      Legislator Belfiglio noted after reviewing the agreement and after consultation with counsel decided not to abstain and instead elected to vote in favor of this resolution as there is no financial impact associated with the resolution. BOCES as a member of the consortium is a good partner to be with.

**Motion Made By:**                      Legislator Carl Belfiglio

**Motion Seconded By:**                      Legislator Chris Allen

**Voting In Favor:**                      Legislators Lopez, Allen, Belfiglio, Heppner, Roberts

**Voting Against:**                      None

**No. of Votes in Favor:**                      5

**No. of Votes Against:**                      0

**Disposition:**                      Carried

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**New Business:** None

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Legislator Carl Belfiglio, seconded by Legislator Chris Allen, all were in favor. Chairman Lopez declared the meeting duly adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Nettie Tomshaw, Legislative Employee